AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows. Please cancel claims 1-5 and 16-36. Claim 6 has been amended. Claims 37-56 have been added. No new matter has been added. A complete listing of the current pending claims is provided below and supersedes all previous claims listing(s).

1-5.   (Canceled)

6.   (Currently Amended) A method for generating a lithography mask, comprising:

generating integrated circuit design data;

analyzing the integrated circuit design data to generate context information for features of a mask ~~without the use of tags~~;

configuring mask design data to emphasize the context and priority of the features in the mask design based on the context information; and

using the context information to write the mask features.

7.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein using context information comprises:

analyzing the mask features for contextual priority.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein using context information comprises:

assigning priorities to the mask features.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein assigning priorities to the mask features comprises:

applying criteria to mask design data by manual process.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein assigning priorities to the mask features comprises:

applying criteria to mask design data by computer-aided automated process.

11.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein using context information comprises:

analyzing mask features to determine circuit elements expected to be produced by a lithography system at a chip wafer surface.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:

configuring a mask design database to include additional contextual mask design data generated in using the contextual information from the integrated circuit design data.

13.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

configuring the mask design database to optimize a write order for use by a mask writing system.

14.   (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein using context information comprises:

passing context information to a mask writing system.

15.   (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein using context information comprises:

controlling a mask writing system based on the context information.

16-36. (Canceled)

37.   (New) An apparatus for generating a lithography mask, comprising:

means for generating integrated circuit design data;

means for analyzing the integrated circuit design data to generate context information for features of a mask;

means for configuring mask design data to emphasize the context and priority of the features in the mask design based on the context information; and

means for using the context information to write the mask features.

38.   (New) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein means for using context information comprises:

means for analyzing the mask features for contextual priority.

39.   (New) The apparatus of claim 38, wherein means for using context information comprises:

means for assigning priorities to the mask features.

40.   (New) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein means for assigning priorities to the mask features comprises:

means for applying criteria to mask design data by manual process.

41.   (New) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein means for assigning priorities to the mask features comprises:

means for applying criteria to mask design data by computer-aided automated process.

42. (New) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein means for using context information comprises:

means for analyzing mask features to determine circuit elements expected to be produced by a lithography system at a chip wafer surface.

43. (New) The apparatus of claim 37, further comprising:

means for configuring a mask design database to include additional contextual mask design data generated in using the contextual information from the integrated circuit design data.

44. (New) The apparatus of claim 43, further comprising:

means for configuring the mask design database to optimize a write order for use by a mask writing system.

45. (New) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein means for using context information comprises:

means for passing context information to a mask writing system.

46. (New) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein means for using context information comprises:

means for controlling a mask writing system based on the context information.

47. (New) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having executable code to execute a process for generating a lithography mask, the process comprising:

generating integrated circuit design data;

analyzing the integrated circuit design data to generate context information for features of a mask;

configuring mask design data to emphasize the context and priority of the features in the mask design based on the context information; and

using the context information to write the mask features.

48. (New) The computer program product of claim 47, wherein using context information comprises:

analyzing the mask features for contextual priority.

49. (New) The computer program product of claim 48, wherein using context information comprises:

assigning priorities to the mask features.

50.   (New) The computer program product of claim 49, wherein assigning priorities to the mask features comprises:

applying criteria to mask design data by manual process.

51.   (New) The computer program product of claim 49, wherein assigning priorities to the mask features comprises:

applying criteria to mask design data by computer-aided automated process.

52.   (New) The computer program product of claim 47, wherein using context information comprises:

analyzing mask features to determine circuit elements expected to be produced by a lithography system at a chip wafer surface.

53.   (New) The computer program product of claim 47, further comprising:

configuring a mask design database to include additional contextual mask design data generated in using the contextual information from the integrated circuit design data.

54.   (New) The computer program product of claim 53, further comprising:

configuring the mask design database to optimize a write order for use by a mask writing system.

55.   (New) The computer program product of claim 47, wherein using context information comprises:

passing context information to a mask writing system.

56.   (New) The computer program product of claim 47, wherein using context information comprises:

controlling a mask writing system based on the context information.